



# ARMENIA

Հայաստան



USAID/Armenia Newsletter, Summer 2004

## **New Child Welfare Program Supported By USAID/Armenia**

USAID is funding a new four-year program to improve conditions within children's institutions and support child welfare. The program will continue the work that Medecins Sans Frontieres-France accomplished during its seven-year tenure in the field of child welfare in Armenia. MSF reported many instances of child abuse in boarding schools, making this follow-up program critical to the welfare of children in these institutions.

World Vision (WV), USAID's new implementing partner, is expanding the child protection program. WV will continue to work with children's institutions to protect child rights, train institution staff to better care for child residents, and work with extremely poor families at risk of abandoning children.

WV will also promote the integration of children from institutions into mainstream schools as well as into Armenian society. WV will expand the program to various marzes where it will conduct home visits as well as provide counseling and emergency aid for extremely poor children, and support income-generating activities for families at risk.

While WV is currently working in the Vardashen Special Institution, the program anticipates entering Nubarashen Boarding School this autumn and also engaging with Kanakert/Zeytun Special Orphanage.

By improving the conditions of the schools and orphanages, and by helping families keep children from being institutionalized to begin with, this program will protect a generation of at-risk children.

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*Renovated Rural Health Post*

## **News Brief –**

USAID/Armenia wished past Mission Director Keith Simmons good luck as he departed for USAID/Serbia, and welcomed **new Mission Director Robin Phillips**.

*Robin Phillips  
Mission Director*



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# Armenia Social Transition Program



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The Armenia Social Transition Program is a USAID funded five year program providing technical assistance to the Government of Armenia in their ongoing reforms in the social and health sectors. The contract for this program of assistance was awarded to PADCO, Inc. in July 2000. [more](#)

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**News**



**Head of Armenian Apostolic Church Gets His Social Security Card**

On July 4, 2004, "Public TV" and "Shoghakat TV" channels reported that the Minister of Social and Labor Issues of the Republic of Armenia has presented a Social Security Card to His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, the Catholicos Karekin II. [more](#)



**Social Security Card Hot Line Sizzles with Calls**

On July 1, 2004, the three-month anniversary of the Social Security Card Hot Line in all Marzes of Armenia and at the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues was celebrated. [more](#)

**Upcoming Events**

**July 13th:** Discussion of the Draft Law on Healthcare at National Institute of Health

**July 14 - 16, 2004:** National Retreat "Primary Health Care Reform Pilot Status and Next Steps"

**July 21, 2004:** Round Table on Draft Social Assistance Law

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**Recent Events**

**Head of Armenian Apostolic Church Gets His Social Security Card**  
July 4, 2004  
[more](#)

**Social Security Card Hot Line Sizzles with Calls**

## Armenian Social Transition Program Continuing Successes

USAID's Armenian Social Transition Program (ASTP) team has worked since mid-2000 with both the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues and the Ministry of Health to implement key social and health reforms. The ASTP is working on pensions, social assistance, Social Security Card system implementation, orphanage care, family medicine training, open enrollment/physician choice programs, and health finance reform. Over 1.7 million applications have now been received for social security cards, including those of President Kocharian and Catholicos Karekin II. More information about the ASTP program, which is being implemented by PADCO, is available at: [www.padco.am](http://www.padco.am)

## High-Quality Reproductive Healthcare

A three-year reproductive health (RH) care project in Armenia demonstrated that investing in primary health care providers leads to increased utilization of high-quality RH care for the most vulnerable rural populations in Armenia. USAID's PRIME II project worked in over 65 health facilities in Lori Marz reaching approximately 65% of the rural population. Physicians, nurses and midwives are now better prepared to offer routine care of pregnant women and infants, treatment and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, and family planning counseling.



## USAID Rehabilitated Nork Marash Medical Center Heating System

Two USAID-funded energy efficiency demonstration projects have been recently completed in Yerevan's Nork Marash Medical Center under the Armenia Energy Efficiency, Demand-Side Management and Renewable Energy Program (EE, DSM and RE Program).

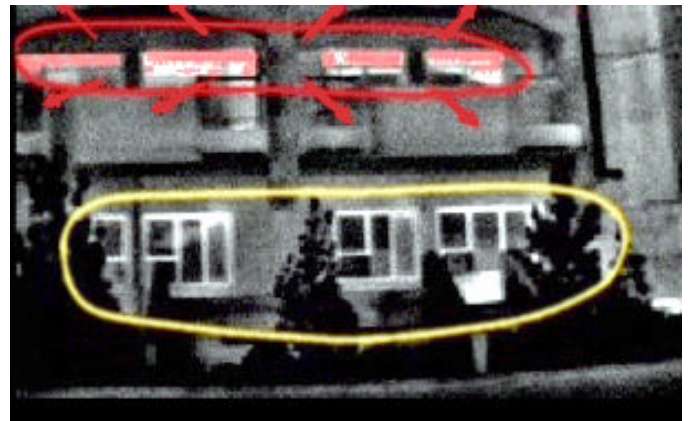
Despite being one of the largest and most advanced medical institutions in Armenia, Nork Marash Center had no centralized heating for nearly a decade. To keep its six buildings warm, the hospital administration had to use electric heaters – a costly and ineffective method of heating. For example, it cost the Center more than \$17,000 to heat the main building alone during the 2002-2003 heating season.

With funding from USAID, Advanced Engineering Associates International – the USAID contractor in the EE, DSM, RE Program – rehabilitated the heating system in two buildings of the Center, converting them to natural gas. The weatherization of windows and doors is additionally saving of up to 20% of heat losses. Pictures taken by a special infrared camera showed almost total reduction of heat losses from windows as a result of the weatherization process.

Additionally, thermo-regulating valves installed on radiators enable occupants to regulate the temperature inside the buildings, thus economizing further on the use of natural gas. The savings to the Medical Center from thermo-regulating valves alone will exceed \$3,000 in the heating season, not to mention providing a more comfortable work environment for staff and patients alike.



*Main building of Nork-Marash Medical Center*



Red - heat losses; Yellow - energy efficient

Renewable energy technologies were also effectively incorporated into this energy efficiency project. Solar collectors are now mounted on the roof and provide hot water for various Medical Center needs.

The hospital administration has been very enthusiastic about the project and greatly appreciated USAID's assistance.

## Cheer Dried Fruit Finding New International Markets

In the sun-soaked fields of Armavir Marz lays an inspiring success story. The Cheer company produces dried fruits and vegetables for export and has been a DAI-ASME partner for more than three years.

The Development Alternatives Incorporated – Agricultural Small and Medium Enterprise (DAI-ASME) project has supported Cheer through various training programs (traceability, food safety/management) and cost-share grants for participation in international trade shows and for local marketing activities. After improving product quality and marketing, Cheer attracted more customers, including new European buyers in prime export markets such as Switzerland and France. Indeed, Cheer has needed to expand to meet demand, and DAI-ASME provide two cost-share grants to facilitate the expansion.

Cheer increased its production capacity 125% by adding 2 new solar dryers, 2 artificial gas-driven dryers, a processing plant and a cold storage facility. Additionally, Cheer has improved sanitary conditions and implemented food-safety control systems. As a result, 15 new jobs were added, and Cheer's export revenues increased 158% to \$110,000 in 2003.

Cheer has used its experience to benefit



*Beirut International Food Show Horeca 2004*

others. With DAI-ASME support, the firm provided two training programs for small-scale solar dryer operators and it has been active in developing sound out-grower networks for the supply of raw materials for their own drying operations.

Additionally, with DAI-ASME help, Cheer has taken the lead in forming the Armenian national "Association of Dried Food Producers". The Association was established in April 2003, and it now counts 52 member producers who work together to give the industry a united voice, share information, and address shared challenges.

Dried fruit and vegetables continue to be an important component of export development in Armenia. DAI-ASME is supporting the association as it expands its member-support and training services, and as it expands its geographic outreach. This cooperative effort between Cheer, the Association and DAI-ASME promises to bring further increases in Armenian exports and employment.



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